

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 05180 080900Z

20

ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5174

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 5180

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: EXTREMIST VIOLENCE

SUMMARY: THE GOI AND SOME STATE GOVERNMENTS HAVE OFFICIALLY ACKNOWLEDGED A NUMBER OF ACTS OF SABOTAGE OVER THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS. THE KERALA AND GUJARAT GOVERNMENTS ARE INVESTINGATING ALLEGED UNDERGROUND CONSPIRACIES INVOLVING QUANTITIES OF EXPLOSIVES SEIZED BY POLICE, AND THE KERALA GOVERNMENT HAS CONFIRMED AN ACT OF SABOTAGE IN A USAID-ASSISTED ELECTRICITY GENERATING PLANT. THE PRESS HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO REPORT THESE INCIDENTS AND HAS COMMENTED ON POSSIBLE FOREIGN CONNECTIONS. OUR ASSESSMENT IS THAT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE SCATTERED ACTS OF SABOTAGE SHOULD NOT BE OVERDRAWN. THE CENSORS' WILLINGNESS TO ALLOW THE PRESS TO REPORT THEM INDICATES THAT THE GOI MAY SEE THE PUBLICITY AS USEFUL EXAMPLES OF THE "THREATS" TO INTERNAL STABILITY ON WHICH THE EMERGENCY AND ITS EXTENSION HAVE BEEN BASED. THE CONGENS AND THE EMBASSY AGREE THAT THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE OR NO SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN TRADITIONAL PATTERNS OF NAXALITE ACTIVITY. THIS, OF COURSE, DOES NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT NAXALISM OR THE PERPETRATION OF ACTS

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 NEW DE 05180 080900Z

OF VIOLENCE BY THE "RIGHT" UNDERGROUND MAY NOT AT SOME

LATER STAGE BECOME MORE DISRUPTIVE, PARTICULARLY IF THERE IS AN ECONOMIC DOWNTURN. END SUMMARY.

1. OVER THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS THE GOI AND SOME STATE GOVERNMENTS HAVE OFFICIALLY ACKNOWLEDGED A NUMBER OF ACTS OF SABOTAGE. THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS REPORT FOR 1975-76 NOTED "A FEW CASES OF SABOTAGE CAME TO NOTICE ON THE RAILWAYS." THE PRESS REPORTED UNION DEPUTY HOME MINISTER MOHSIN AS TELLING THE LOK SABHA ON APRIL 1 THAT RECENT DISCOVERIES OF DYNAMITE CACHES IN BARODA AND KERALA AND SOME ACTS OF RAILWAY SABOTAGE SHOWED THAT WORKERS OF BANNED ORGANIZATIONS WERE WORKING UNDERGROUND. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, MOHSIN ASSURED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD MAKE ALL EFFORTS TO UNEARTH UNDERGROUND ELEMENTS RESORTING TO ACTS OF SABOTAGE.

2. A MARCH 30 SAMACHAR ARTICLE REPORTED THE KERALA HOME MINISTER AS TELLING THE STATE ASSEMBLY THAT POLICE RAIDS AROUND THE STATE ON THE PREVIOUS DAY HAD ROUNDED UP 650 KGS OF DYNAMITE AND 2,900 DYNAMITE STICKS. THE ARTICLE NOTED THAT THE STATE MINISTER WAS RESPONDING TO A CONCERN VOICED FROM THE FLOOR OF "SOME RECENT INCIDENTS, INCLUDING THE ONE AT THE SABARIGIRI PROJECT IN WHICH ONE GENERATOR WAS DAMAGED BY AN EXPLOSION." CONGEN MADRAS REPORTS THAT THE MINISTER ALSO COMMENTED THAT AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EXPLOSION ENABLED THE POLICE "TO GET INFORMATION ABOUT SPYING ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN POWERS." (COMMENT: CONGEN MADRAS LEARNED FROM THE KERALA ELECTRICITY BOARD CHAIRMAN THAT THE MARCH 18 EXPLOSION AT SABARIGIRI SHEERED THE SHAFT CONNECTING A TURBINE WITH A 50 KW GENERATOR, DAMAGING THE GENERATOR, THE TURBINE, OTHER EQUIPMENT, AND THE BUILDING. THE 50 MW ALLIS CHALMERS GENERATOR WAS FINANCED BY AID IN THE 1960'S. END COMMENT.)

3. THE "MADRAS MAIL" AND THE "INDIAN EXPRESS" RECENTLY EDITORIALIZED ON SABOTAGE ATTEMPTS. THE "MAIL" ON MARCH 31 STATED THAT: "THERE HAVE BEEN ATTACKS ON INDIVIDUALS AND PROPERTY DURING THE LAST SIX MONTHS, DESCRIBED OFFICIALLY AS STRAY INCIDENTS, BUT THE TARGETS SELECTED, OFTEN A POLICE STATION OR POWER

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NEW DE 05180 080900Z

HOUSE, LEAVE NO DOUBT (THAT) THE INTENTION OF THE EXTREMISTS ELEMENTS (IS) THE CREATION OF DISORDER AND DISRUPTION OF CIVIL LIFE. THE EXPLOSION IN THE MOOZHAIYAR (SABARIGIRI) POWER HOUSE...AND THE DAMAGE AT THE IDDIKI PROJECT SITE AS A RESULT OF SUBVERSIVE ACTS WILL NOT BE TREATED LIGHTLY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SUSPICION IN THE COUNTRY OVER FOREIGN COMPLICITY IN INTERNAL ORDER." THE "INDIAN EXPRESS" EDITORIALIZED ON APRIL 1: "OWING TO LACK

OF PRECISE INFORMATION IT IS DIFFICULT TO IDENTIFY THE GROUPS RESPONSIBLE. THE UNION HOME MINISTER CALLS THEM ABSCONDING ACTIVISTS OF THE BANDED ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER ANTI-NATIONAL ELEMENTS...IT IS CLEAR THAT AT LEAST IN KERALA THE EXTREMISTS HAVE MADE CONSIDERABLE PREPARATIONS AND THAT THEIR THREAT MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY." 5#3 3\$85948-) &93 9, 59 74&3 5#3 &9;34,.3,5 59 43;3-) 5#3 \$35-8) 9* -,6 "CONCLUSIVE" EVIDENCE IT HAS ON FOREIGN CONNECTIONS WITH THE BARODA OR KERALA INCIDENTS.

4. COMMENT: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SCATTERED INCIDENTS OF SABOTAGE THAT HAVE SURFACED IN THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS SHOULD NOT BE OVERDRAWN. THE SPECIFIC INCIDENTS IN BARODA AND KERALA THAT THE GOI HAS ALLOWED THE PRESS TO REPORT IN SOME DETAIL AND THE HOME MINISTRY'S OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION OF ACTS OF SABOTAGE (PARA 1 ABOVE) COULD BE SEEN BY THE GOI AS USEFUL EXAMPLES OF THE "THREATS" TO INTERNAL STABILITY ON WHICH THE EMERGENCY AND ITS EXTENSION HAVE BEEN BASED. (THIS, OF COURSE, CONTRASTS WITH THE TOTAL CENSORSHIP OF THE FEBRUARY 24 JAIL BREAKOUT IN CALCUTTA.) THE REFERENCES TO A FOREIGN CONNECTION IN THE BARODA AND KERALA INCIDENTS REFLECT THE "FOREIGN DANGERS" THEME THAT HAS BEEN A PART OF PUBLIC JUSTIFICATION OF THE EMERGENCY BY MRS. GANDHI, GOI AND STATE LEVEL LEADERS SINCE LAST JUNE.

5. THE REPORT INCIDENTS OF SABOTAGE SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS ILLUSTRATIVE OF A SIGNIFICANT RISE IN NAXALITE OR OTHER EXTREMIST ACTIVITIES. (GEORGE FERNANDES HAS PREVIOUSLY BRAGGED TO A WESTERN DIPLOMAT THAT HE AND HIS GROUP, PRESUMABLY RAILROAD WORKERS AND OTHERS FROM THE SOCIALIST PARTY AND LABOR UNIONS, WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR EXPLOSIONS ON THE RAIL LINES.) THE CONGENS (WHOM WE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 NEW DE 05180 080900Z

HAVE JUST QUERIED SEPARATELY ON THIS MATTER) AND THE EMBASSY AGREE THAT THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE OR NO CHANGE IN THE PATTERN OF NAXALITE ACTIVITIES OVER THE PAST YEAR. IN SOME TRADITIONALLY TROUBLED AREAS, SUCH AS NORTHERN ANDHRA PRADESH, NAXALITE ACTIVITY MAY HAVE EVEN BEEN REDUCED SINCE THE IMPOSITION OF THE EMERGENCY. THIS, OF COURSE, DOES NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT NAXALISM OR THE PREPETRATION OF ACTS OF VIOLENCE BY THE "RIGHT" UNDERGROUND MAY NOT AT SOME LATER STAGE BECOME AN OUTLET FOR EXPRESSION OF OPPOSITION TO MRS. GANDHI'S RULE, PARTICULARLY IF THERE IS AN ECONOMIC DOWNTURN (NEW DELHI A-43.). SCHNEIDER

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